

Frome Urban District Council.

Medical Officer of Health's Report.

To the Chairman and Members of the Frome Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to submit the report for the year 1918.

Three noticeable features in the sanitary records of the year claim attention, which materially affected the incidence of disease, as well as the death-rate in the district, viz.: The extremely wet and changeable weather that prevailed for the greater part of the year; the prolonged prevalence of the outbreak of diphtheria; and, thirdly, the two successive and virulent epidemics of influenza, which as part of the widespread and indeed world-wide epidemic that caused so much havoc amongst the world's manhood.

As in previous years, there is a declining birth-rate, while the death-rate is slightly in excess of last year.

Appended is a summarised statement of vital statistics and general administration.

General Statistics.

The estimated population in the middle of 1918 was 10,741.

Births.

Number registered 139. Number notified under Notification of Births Act, 146. Birth-rate, 13·59. Rate of infantile mortality, 54·79.

Deaths	Under 1 week	2	1-4 weeks (incl.)	3
under	1-6 months	2	6-12 months	1
1 year	Total	8		

Of these 8 deaths 6 were males and 2 females. Four were certified as due to premature birth, congenital debility, etc., three to bronchial pneumonia, and one to infective enteritis.

Deaths.

All registered, 164. Corrected for inward and outward transfer, 164.

Death-rate at estimated civilian population of 9,336 (after correction for transfers), 17·56. The following is a tabular statement of the causes at all ages :—

Name of disease.	Male.	Female.
Diphtheria and croup ...	2	2
Influenza ...	17	16
Pulmonary tuberculosis ...	5	8
Other tuberculosis diseases ...	1	1
Cancer, malignant disease ...	9	6
Organic heart disease ...	10	4
Bronchitis ...	3	3
Pneumonia ...	6	7
Other respiratory diseases ...	1	2
Diarrhoea, etc. ...	1	0
Cirrhosis of the liver ...	1	0
Nephritis and Bright's disease	0	3
Congenital debility, etc. ...	3	1
Violence, apart from suicide ...	2	0
Other defined diseases ...	23	27
Total ...	84	80

Of the total of 164 deaths, 84 were males and 80 females. Of these 33 were certified as due to influenza, 24 of which were between the ages of 15 and 45 years, an ominous significance that the heaviest toll was among the adolescent and middle-aged, while on the other hand the deaths recorded from pneumonia and bronchitis were chiefly among the aged and very young.

The deaths from cancer (malignant disease) and organic heart disease are about the same as in previous years.

Infectious Diseases.

The following table gives the list of notifiable diseases reported during the year :—

Infectious Diseases.	Cases Notified.	Deaths.	Removed to Hospital.
Diphtheria ...	48	4	37
Carriers, 16.			
Scarlet fever ...	9	0	3
Measles ...	28	0	0
German measles ...	1	0	0
Pulmonary tuberculosis	20	13	0
Other tuberculosis varieties ...	2	2	0
Total ...	108	19	40

Diphtheria has been prevalent the whole year: the last case was notified during the first week in December. As the accommodation at the Isolation Hospital was inadequate, several cases were removed to the Coleford Isolation Hospital, which was kindly placed at the disposal of the Council by the Rural District Council. A new structure to meet future requirements is now in process of completion.

The following is a subsidiary report on the outbreak, or, rather, series of outbreaks, of diphtheria, that have been prevalent in this district since May, 1917 :—

It could at once be said that this epidemic has been the most serious visitation recorded since 1891, for in no one year in that period has there been so many cases notified as in the present epidemic, during which and up to the 31st December 81 cases were reported, of which 11 proved fatal, while 30 carrier cases have been discovered.

Owing to the inadequacy of hospital accommodation and to the callous, if not wilful, ignorance of some parents and guardians in respect to any throat affections amongst children, it inevitably entailed much of my time and watchfulness in coping with the insidious spread of the disease. Swabs from inmates of infected households and scholars from the various infected schools were taken to the number of approximately 1,200.

General Sanitary Administration.

Owing to the war conditions no change has been made in the general Sanitary Administration.

There is a considerable shortage of housing accommodation which it is imperative for the Council to consider immediately, and I am pleased to note that a scheme is already in course of preparation for the erection of 100 new houses under the new Government programme of Reconstruction.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I wish to thank you, and those associated with me, for the cordial sympathy, kindly assistance, and unfailing courtesy always shown me.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ALBIN SEDDON.

**Frome Urban District
Council.**

REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER

For the Year 1918.
